

Editor's Notes for *Misa de Difuntos*

Hilarión Eslava's setting for *Misa De Difuntos* ("Mass for the Dead", or "Requiem Mass") is a truly breathtaking example of classical religious music at its best. This special Roman Catholic Mass is offered for the repose of the soul or souls of one or more deceased persons, using a particular form of the Roman Missal. It is usually, but not necessarily, celebrated in the context of a funeral.

The traditional Catholic liturgy for this rite has inspired many renowned composers (including Mozart, Verdi, Berlioz, Saint-Saëns, Brahms, Dvořák, Fauré, Duruflé, to name a few). Eslava's version is every bit as brilliant and passionate. His version has seven movements, the second one ("Dies Irae" or "Day of Wrath") being by far the longest and most tempestuous. The version of this work used here was published in 1861 by the Calcografía de Bonifacio Eslava in Madrid, under Op. 143, a scanned copy of which was obtained from the Biblioteca Nacional de España. The setting is nominally for SATB choir and chamber orchestra, but other vocal settings (for example, with the inclusion of solo parts) are possible. The keyboard reduction (added for practice purposes) is mine.

Although I was working from a printed score, I found quite a few errors, as well as inconsistencies in the dynamics. I did my best to reconcile such issues, but anyone using this score should probably also refer to the printed original.

There is a wonderful live concert recording of this piece by the Orquesta Sinfónica Goya and the Federación de Coros de Navarra, conducted by Jesús Echeverría, on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3NKt5xMXdY>

Finally, and as a historical point of interest, it has been said that the last time during Eslava's lifetime that this composition was performed was following the death of Spain's queen consort, María de las Mercedes de Orleans y Borbón, on June 26, 1878, a few months after her wedding to king Alfonso XII (on January 23, 1878) and a only few weeks before Eslava's own death (on July 23, 1878). An immensely popular figure at the time, the young queen's passing was genuinely mourned by her subjects, but we can imagine that it would have been particularly felt by the Master of her Royal Chapel, who would have rejoiced with her birth and baptism at the Royal Palace in 1860, her close relationship to his beloved Sevilla (where she grew up), and her much celebrated royal wedding. On the occasion of the latter, Eslava presented María de las Mercedes with a motet especially composed for the nuptials and dedicated to her, "Domine salvum fac regem" ("Lord, save the king"), which incidentally, we have located and are hoping to be able to transcribe and publish on our site soon. According to an apocryphal story, though extremely ill and barely able to stand, Eslava insisted on conducting his Mass in honor of the deceased queen, "out of his affection and loyalty" toward the royal family. This would have been probably the official Mass celebrated in state for the queen at the Salón de las Columnas ("Hall of the Columns") of the Royal Palace in Madrid on the morning of July 28, just before her body was taken to the Monastery of El Escorial for burial.



“View of the Salón de las Columnas of the Palacio Real during the exposition of the body of H.M. Doña Mercedes”, by Eugenio Vela, “La Academia”, Tomo IV, nº2, July 15, 1878. Public domain.

Misa de Difuntos

Latin Text and Translation

1. Requiem Æternam	
Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion, et tibi reddetur votum in Ierusalem: exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis caro veniet. Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. Kyrie, eleison. Christe, eleison. Kyrie, eleison.	Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Zion; and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem: hear my prayer; all flesh shall come to Thee. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
2. Dies Iræ	
Dies iræ, dies illa Solvat sæclum in favilla, Teste David cum Sibylla. Quantus tremor est futurus, Quando Iudex est venturus, Cuncta stricte discussurus! Tuba mirum spargens sonum, Per sepulchra regionum, Coget omnes ante thronum. Mors stupebit et natura, Cum resurget creatura, Iudicanti responsura. Liber scriptus proferetur, In quo totum continetur, Unde mundus judicetur. Iudex ergo cum sedebit, Quidquid latet apparebit: Nil inultum remanebit. Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? Quem patronum rogaturus, Cum vix justus sit securus?	The day of wrath, that day will dissolve the world in ashes, David being witness along with the Sibyl. How great will be the quaking, when the Judge is about to come, strictly examining all things. The trumpet, scattering a wondrous sound through the sepulchres of the regions, will summon all before the throne. Death and nature will marvel, when the creature will rise again, to respond to the Judge. The written book will be brought forth, in which all is contained, from which the world shall be judged. When therefore the Judge will sit, whatever lies hidden will appear: nothing will remain unpunished. What then shall I, poor wretch [that I am], say? Which patron shall I entreat, when [even] the just may [only] hardly be sure?

Rex tremendæ majestatis, Qui salvandos salvas gratis, Salva me, fons pietatis.	King of fearsome majesty, Who gladly saves those fit to be saved, save me, O fount of mercy.
Recordare, Jesu pie, Quod sum causa tuæ viæ: Ne me perdas illa die.	Remember, merciful Jesus, that I am the cause of Thy journey: lest Thou lose me in that day.
Quærens me, sedisti lassus: Redemisti Crucem passus: Tantus labor non sit cassus.	Seeking me, Thou rested, tired: Thou redeemed me, having suffered the Cross: let not such hardship be in vain.
Juste Judex ultionis, Donum fac remissionis, Ante diem rationis.	Just Judge of vengeance, make a gift of remission before the day of reckoning.
Ingemisco, tamquam reus: Culpa rubet vultus meus: Supplicanti parce, Deus.	I sigh, like the guilty one: my face reddens in guilt: Spare the imploring one, O God.
Qui Mariam absolvisti, Et latronem exaudisti, Mihi quoque spem dedisti.	Thou who absolved Mary, and heard the robber, gave hope to me also.
Preces meæ non sunt dignæ; Sed tu bonus fac benigne, Ne perenni cremer igne.	My prayers are not worthy: but O Thou, [who art] good, graciously grant that I be not burned up by the everlasting fire.
Inter oves locum præsta. Et ab hædis me sequestra, Statuens in parte dextra.	Grant me a place among the sheep, and take me out from among the goats, setting me on the right side.
Confutatis maledictis, Flammis acribus addictis, Voca me cum benedictis.	Once the cursed have been silenced, sentenced to acrid flames: Call me, with the blessed.
Oro supplex et acclinis, Cor contritum quasi cinis, Gere curam mei finis.	[Humbly] kneeling and bowed I pray, [my] heart crushed as ashes: take care of my end.
Lacrimosa dies illa, Qua resurget ex favilla, Judicandus homo reus. Huic ergo parce, Deus:	Tearful [will be] that day, on which from the glowing embers will arise the guilty man who is to be judged. Then spare him, O God.
Pie Jesu Domine, Dona eis requiem. Amen.	Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest. Amen.

3. Ofertorio	
Domine Iesu Christe, Rex gloriæ, libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de pœnis inferni et de profundo lacu: libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum: sed signifer sanctus Michael repræsentet eas in lucem sanctam: Quam olim Abrahæ promisisti, et semini eius.	Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit: deliver them from the lion's mouth, that hell swallow them not up, that they fall not into darkness, but let the standard-bearer holy Michael lead them into that holy light: Which Thou didst promise of old to Abraham and to his seed.
4. Sanctus	
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.	Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.
5. Benedictus	
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.	Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
6. Agnus Dei	
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona eis requiem. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona eis requiem. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona eis requiem sempiternam.	Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest.
7. Lux Æterna	
Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine: Cum Sanctis tuis in æternum: quia pius es. Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. Cum Sanctis tuis in æternum: quia pius es.	May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord, with Thy Saints for evermore: for Thou art gracious. Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them: With Thy Saints for evermore, for Thou art gracious.